**Health Related Issue: Ignition Interlock Devices Should be Mandatory on all Vehicles: Yes or No**

The average drunk driver has driven drunk 87 times before a first arrest. And on any given day, your family shares the roadways with more than 2 million drunk drivers who have had three or more prior convictions. That is why MADD now supports the usage of ignition interlock devices, or in-car breathalyzers, which require all convicted drunk drivers to prove they are sober before the car will start.  Today, 47 states and the District of Columbia have interlock ignition laws for at least some offenders. Alabama, South Dakota and Vermont have no such laws.

They are installed in about 150,000 vehicles in the USA — a number that would approach 1 million if they were required for every convicted drunken driver. You have to wonder why these devices aren’t on every new automobile passing through car dealerships everywhere. The premise is quite simple and effective. Before a car can be started, one must blow into a breathalyzer type device successfully proving they are not intoxicated before the ignition will unlock.

Some may think this is akin to killing mosquitoes with hand grenades, but when two thirds of the drivers on the road between midnight and 4:00 am have been drinking it becomes startling clear why these devices are necessary. We are all literally risking our lives when we are on the roads what with careless driving in general. It’s dangerous enough out there already, but throw drunk drivers into the equation and it’s almost enough to make you stay home! These devices, or at least a version of it, are currently used by the courts in some jurisdictions as a restraint against re-offending after a drunk driver has been charged.

**How IIDs work**

When the driver enters the vehicle, the device prompts them for a breath sample. Breath patterns are pre-programmed to avoid mechanical tampering and some devices measure breath temperature in an effort to foil false air induction, say through an air filled balloon or air pump. The IID is programmed for a Breath alcohol concentration level usually set by the state. Wisconsin for example uses 0.02% [Brac] set point. When a Brac level is blown at or over the set point the car ignition is locked preventing the driver from starting the car. The device displays a pass, fail, or inadequate sample reading.

**Tampering**

Passing allows the car to be started immediately. Three successive failures will lock the ignition. The inadequate sample reading is caused by not providing enough air, stopping in the middle of the process, or failing to blow/suck or hum in the correct manner. If an inadequate sample is drawn, the device prompts you to try two more additional times.

The driver has three chances to provide a valid sample. If he fails to do so, the IID records a violations reset, requiring the driver to return the unit to the service provider within seven days or risk permanent lockout. When the driver successfully provides a sample below the set point, the car can start. Five minutes after ignition and then randomly in 5-30 minutes increments, the IID will request additional breath samples, called rolling retests. Rolling retests are designed to remove the possibility of a sober friend from assisting an intoxicated driver and in any event the drunk driver cannot get far.

Three consecutive refusals to provide a rolling retest or three breath tests over the set point will start the horn honking and emergency lights flashing. This less than subtle display continues until the driver turns off the ignition which immobilizes the car for 15 minutes. This event, or any attempt to tamper with or subvert the IID, is recorded in the IID as a violations reset, requiring the driver to bring the IID in for service.

**Why IIDs can be both good and bad**

Proponents of broader use of interlock systems — including MADD, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and the Governors Highway Safety Association — say they would save an additional 4,000-8,000 lives a year.

They point to New Mexico, which was a perennial national leader in alcohol-related crashes in 2005 when it became the first state to require ignition interlocks for all convicted drunken drivers. The interlock law was part of a campaign that has spurred a 35% drop in drunken-driving deaths there.

A federal law on interlocks is a "slippery slope," says Sarah Longwell, managing director of the American Beverage Institute, a restaurant and tavern trade group. "As this creeping mentality about 'don't drink and drive' as opposed to 'don't drive drunk' takes over, you're seeing more officers inclined to arrest people" below the legal limit for intoxication, she says.

The devices also place a financial burden on first time offenders that might prevent them from seeking treatment, says Carl Wicklund, executive director of the Lexington, Ky.-based American Probation and Parole Association (APPA), which represents 35,000 probation and parole professionals. The average device will cost the consumer $1,000 after installation. Although it is also fair to say that this financial burden, could prevent drunk drivers from re-offending as well.

Some say to force anyone who owns a car to submit to the hassle of breathing into a machine just to ignite their engine is crossing into a territory where government should not be going. Unless the person is a proven threat to society — like being convicted of a DUI or multiple DUIs — then the highway bill’s invasion of someone’s car is a potential threat to yet another freedom. Although these devices are mainly used to keep the frequently offending drunk driver off the roads, it is difficult to counteract the fact that, should they become mandatory on all vehicles, lives would be saved.

**For More Information Go To: http://interlockfacts.com/newsroom/**

**Assignment: Consider the pros and cons of making ignition interlock devices mandatory on all vehicles manufactured in the United States. While brainstorming think about safety and lives lost, financial burden, distraction, social burden, personal freedom, etc. THEN complete the online discussion assignment listed below.**

**Online Discussion Assignment:**  
**Between Tuesday 9/18 and Saturday 9/22 each student must make 2 posts following the guidelines listed below.**  
  
**Directions:**   
You must complete at least 2 posts, one original post and one comment post. Each post should be a well-developed paragraph.(In order to get an A you must write 3 posts) To make an original post, click on “New Post” and enter a relevant subject title so your classmates will know whether or not they want to comment on your post. Then write your message in the box below the subject line. A subject title like “Ban the Breathalyzers” will likely get more comments than “Ignition Interlocks.”  
  
**The Original Post Should Be:**

- A position statement related to the issue of making ignition interlock devices mandatory on all vehicles in the United States. The first sentence should be a STRONG statement indicating your view for or against the issue. Your statement should reflect your understanding of the issue and include at least two relevant facts to support your viewpoint. You may include quotes from the article above, information from other sources you used to research the issue, or information from the class discussion.

Example:

Since cigarettes kill more than 400,000 people every year in the United States, they should be added to the list of illegal substances in this country. Cigarettes kill more people than cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamines combined and cost the taxpayers of the U.S. over 96 billion dollars in health care costs. A 2006 poll done by the Drug Policy Alliance of Washington D.C. found that 45 percent of Americans would support making cigarettes illegal in the next 10 years. With the overwhelming human and financial toll on the United States, tobacco products should be illegal.

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**Comments on Original Postings:**

- Should address your classmates ideas, but also offer and discuss your own opinion about the issue being discussed.

Example:

Although making tobacco products illegal would inevitably save the lives of many citizens of the United States as well as reduce the financial burden created by the health care costs associated with the use of these products, it is an absolute infringement on the personal rights of Americans. Smoking is a choice, and although an unhealthy choice, tobacco products cannot be compared with other illicit drugs. Tobacco use do not cause a high hindering cognitive function, thus it can be used on a daily basis without interfering with employee responsibilities. In addition, an enormous number of Americans rely on this industry for economic purposes, and eliminating it could be devastating to millions of Americans for financial reasons.   
  
**Grading:** You will receive a rubric in class that you are expected to use as a guideline for submitting quality work! Posts will be graded on a twenty five point scale. The assignment will count as two homework grades.